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February 24, 2020

Thank you for subscribing to my e-newsletter. Below you will find updates from federal, state and local agencies. Should you have any questions about the information below, please do not hesitate to contact us using the contact details listed at the end of this newsletter.

It was an honor to speak on behalf of all of the constituents of District 127 last Thursday at the San Jacinto River Authority Special Board Meeting. Thank you to all of those who spent their time and energy advocating for such an important issue for our area!

Many of you have already voted during early voting this past week. For those of you who have not yet voted, please take some time to vote during early voting, which continues through this Friday, February 28th. Election Day is March 3rd; more voter information can be found below in the newsletter.

Should you have questions regarding anything in this newsletter, please feel free to contact us directly using the information provided at the bottom of this email.

Sincerely,



February 2020 Calendar

Download my February 2020 calendar by clicking the link below. This month is full of events in and around Texas that could be fun or useful to you and your family! This new format allows you to save the document for printing or sending to your family members.

Keep watch for these updated calendars at the beginning of each month. Important local and legislative dates and events will be posted here.

[CLICK HERE TO DOWNLOAD
THE CALENDAR!](#)

February 2020

(An event of this color is located in Austin, Texas. (unless otherwise noted).)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						House Rules & P&G Lock-Up
			House Committee on State & Marine	Senate Committee on Business and Commerce	House Rules	House Rules
		House Committee on Higher Education	Coastal Texas Study Open House Texas Back in Business Webinar	Coastal Texas Study Open House		House Rules
		Early Voting	Early Voting	Early Voting	Early Voting	Early Voting
	President's Day (Office Closed)			House Committee on Culture, Recreation & Tourism, Wildlife	House Committee on International Relations & Economic Development, Trade	House Committee on Transportation, Land
Early Voting	Early Voting	Early Voting	Early Voting	Early Voting	Early Voting	Early Voting
	Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs & Border Security, Heritage	Senate Committee on Finance	Senate Committee on State Affairs			House Rules

Thank you for downloading our Calendar for the month of January. You can use this document to view the links that contain more information about various events occurring in House District 127 and in Austin, Texas. You may also print it to get a basic idea of what I'll be up to this month. I hope to see you around town!

Sincerely,

 Dan Halbert
 Representative of House District 127

Updates from Austin

Ready. Check. Vote.



Texas Secretary of State Ruth Hughs today announced a new statewide initiative, "Ready. Check. Vote.," to educate Texas voters about what they need to bring to the polls when they cast their ballot. The campaign will utilize social media, paid advertising, and a grassroots tour to communicate to Texans the seven approved forms of photo identification and what to do if they do not possess and cannot reasonably obtain one of these seven forms. In its 2019 session, the Texas Legislature appropriated funding to the Secretary of State's office for this initiative.

The Ready. Check. Vote. grassroots tour visited San Antonio last week and will be in Brownsville and Hidalgo on February 29th and March 7th, respectively. Later this year, the tour will expand to additional cities across the Lone Star State.

Texas voters who possess one of the seven approved forms of photo ID must present that ID at the polls. Voters who do not possess and cannot reasonably obtain one of the seven forms of approved photo ID may execute a Reasonable Impediment Declaration form, available to them at each polling location, and provide a supporting form of identification. In addition, some voters may qualify for an exemption to presenting an acceptable form of photo identification or following the Reasonable Impediment Declaration procedure.

The seven forms of approved photo ID are:

- Texas Driver License issued by the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS)**
- Texas Election Identification Certificate issued by DPS
- Texas Personal Identification Card issued by DPS
- Texas Handgun License issued by DPS
- United States Military Identification Card containing the person's photograph
- United States Citizenship Certificate containing the person's photograph
- United States Passport (book or card)

****License is not required to be REAL ID compliant**

With the exception of the U.S. Citizenship Certificate, which does not expire, the approved photo ID must be current or, for voters aged 18-69, have expired no more than four years before being presented for voter qualification at the polling place. A voter 70 years of age or older may use a form of approved photo ID listed above that has expired for any length of time if the identification is otherwise valid.

If a voter does not possess one of the forms of approved photo identification listed above, and the voter cannot reasonably obtain such identification, the voter may fill out a Reasonable Impediment Declaration form, which will be available at each polling location, and present a copy or original of one of the following supporting forms of identification:

- a government document that shows the voter's name and an address, including the voter's voter

- registration certificate
- a current utility bill
- a bank statement
- a government check
- a paycheck
- a certified domestic (from a U.S. state or territory) birth certificate
- a document confirming birth admissible in a court of law which establishes the voter's identity (which may include a foreign birth document)

The address on an approved form of photo identification or a supporting form of identification, if applicable, does not have to match the voter's address on the list of registered voters.

If a voter meets these requirements and is otherwise eligible to vote, the voter will be able to cast a regular ballot in the election.

Voters with a disability may apply with the county voter registrar for a permanent exemption to presenting an acceptable form of photo identification or following the Reasonable Impediment Declaration procedure at the polls. Voters with a religious objection to being photographed or voters who do not present an approved form of photo identification or follow the Reasonable Impediment Declaration procedure at the polls because of certain natural disasters may apply for a temporary exemption to presenting an acceptable form of photo identification or following the Reasonable Impediment Declaration procedure. For more details, voters may contact their [county voter registrar](#).

Voters with questions about how to cast a ballot in the 2020 elections can call 1-800-252-VOTE.

For more information on voting in Texas, visit www.votetexas.gov

Texas Department of Public Safety: Customer Wait Time Update



The Texas Department of Public Safety has been developing a new appointment solution to reduce the long wait times our customers have been experiencing. Select driver license offices will begin piloting this program starting in April 2020. Upon successful completion of the pilot, the appointment program will be added to all driver license offices across the state. In an effort to make sure customers are aware of the changes, we are offering you the following information to share with your constituents.

The current system is a “same-day-only” queuing model, which limits customers to scheduling an approximate service time for the same day. This model is based on a limited first-come, first-serve basis, and once the daily queue has reached capacity, customers must wait for the next business day to attempt to schedule a service time online. This model is inefficient and results in extended wait-times, overcrowding, and our inability to serve our customers at their convenience.

The new appointment program will allow customers the opportunity to schedule driver license services up to six months in advance, using an online link or in a driver license office. Customers will have more flexibility to schedule an appointment based on their availability and the location of their choosing. This appointment program will help minimize wait times and long lines, as customers will need to arrive a short time before their appointment. Customers that do not schedule an appointment in advance will be given the opportunity at the driver license office to secure same day appointments that may be available, schedule for a future date, or different location. While we still may not have capacity to serve all customers at an individual office for a specific day, we will provide the tools to empower customers to make appointments at their convenience.

The appointment solution will be added to driver license offices in phases. The Department's website will be updated to reflect appointment-only services for each driver license office as it is added.

If you have any questions or would like more information, please feel free to contact the Department's

Updates From the District

Lives Over Levels Update from the Lake Houston Area Chamber of Commerce



The following post was provided by the Lake Houston Area Chamber of Commerce.

I wanted to recap the conclusion of the Lake Houston Area Chamber's Lives Over Levels Campaign to the San Jacinto River Authority Board of Directors to temporarily and seasonally lower Lake Conroe, review the vote held Thursday night in Conroe, and discuss how it is a big WIN for our area.

I'm sure by now, you've heard the San Jacinto River Authority Board of Directors approved to continue temporary, seasonal lowering of Lake Conroe at Thursday night's Special Board Meeting.

Before going into the details of the vote, I want to let you know that the Lake Houston Area Chamber was proud to collaborate with local elected officials and play a major role in the outcome of this important issue. Going far beyond providing campaign shirts and bus transportation to the meeting, we weighed in and worked with City of Houston Mayor Pro Tem Dave Martin and State Representative Dan Huberty on the final proposal made by the City of Houston. As you consider "what does the Chamber do for me and my business", I implore you to remember that we were on the front line of this issue, fighting to protect not only your business - but ALL 7,500 businesses in our area as well as our residents and the greater Lake Houston Area community.

The temporary seasonal lowering of Lake Conroe will begin in the spring on April 1 with SJRA gradually reducing the lake from 201' msl to an elevation of 200' msl. Recapture will begin June 1. This strategy is no different from the 2019 Spring Mitigation Strategy.

In the fall, SJRA voted to lower the elevation to 200' msl from August 1 to August 31. (In 2019 it was lowered to 199' msl). Then beginning September 1, Lake Conroe will be lowered to the elevation of 199.5' msl with recapture beginning October 1. If a storm enters the region, the City of Houston may initiate an additional prerelease to 199 ft. by notifying the SJRA in writing of their call for prerelease.

This plan is effective through December 2022.

This overall plan is different from the protocol put in place in 2018 and 2019. So why is this a big win and a good solution for our area?

Keep in mind:

- The point of temporary, seasonal lowering is to help provide capacity as we work to complete recovery and resiliency projects. As we've completed projects (such as two rounds of dredging) it's reasonable for our original 2018 lowering strategy to be modified.
- Lake Houston will be lowered 1 ft below normal pool elevation for the entire 2020 year while dam repairs are being made, adding to capacity.
- Since the approval of the original seasonal lowering of Lake Conroe was made nearly two years ago millions of cubic yards of sand has been removed. The decrease in sand and sediment has restored some capacity in our waterways - we HAVE made significant progress with our dredging projects.
- The SJRA Board agreed to do the new protocol for seasonal lowering of Lake Conroe through the end of 2022 giving us three years to get our gates in place - previous votes have only been for one year.
 - The board agreed to give us the time we requested to finish projects. They listened to our definition of a "temporary request" and approved it. They could have chosen to review again after one year (as they have with the past two votes) and we would be doing this all over again next year.
- If a storm enters the region, the City of Houston may initiate an additional prerelease to 199 ft. by notifying the SJRA in writing of their call for prerelease. Keep in mind, this is the first time we've ever moved the needle on a prerelease strategy with named storms.

Also, note:

- The Lake Conroe Association has been requesting the SJRA Board discontinue seasonal lake lowering and made this proposal at the January 21 Special Meeting.
- At the end of the January meeting, SJRA Board Chairman Tisdale said by the next meeting (Feb 20), he wanted everyone to work collaboratively to strike a balance and come back with solutions.
- Lake Conroe Association did not change their position or come back with alternative solutions. They stuck to their original "no lowering" request. Instead of working to strike a balance, they even spent \$12,000 to do their own study in order to prove their point that lake lowering provided

no real benefit. This resulted in the board not only disregarding their request to stop lowering Lake Conroe, but they went further by opting to not revisit this issue for another three years.

- Our leadership, including Rep. Dan Huberty and Mayor Pro Tem Dave Martin worked continuously together to find a way to restructure the original plan from 2018 & 2019. We were all in support of the suggested protocol by the City of Houston which was presented by Mayor Pro Tem Dave Martin. We made the point that Lake Houston will also be lowered by 1ft from normal pool level for the entire year – thus sharing in the lake lowering burden. Additionally, since we have made significant progress with dredging, we felt the proposal of lowering Lake Conroe to 200 feet msl from April 1 - May 31 and to 199.5 feet msl from August 1 – September 30 was an appropriate proposal.
 - Although SJRA Board Members Mark Micheletti and Kaaren Cambio voted in favor of the City of Houston's proposal, the motion failed.
 - The final approved recommendation was a very similar. With the exception of 6" in August, we got everything we asked for with an additional bonus of this being in place for three years and an agreement the City of Houston could call for an additional lowering of 6" by written request when there is a named storm in the gulf.

We overcame what seemed at times were insurmountable odds to make this outcome happen. The last two weeks we faced numerous roadblocks, opposition from various local, state and federal elected officials, recommendations made by state agencies which provided less protection than we had requested, as well as a well-funded advertising campaign with billboards, ads, bumper stickers – all demanding SJRA "Stop The Drop."

WE NEVER GAVE UP AND WE PREVAILED.

Please take a moment to personally thank Mark Micheletti and Kaaren Cambio, two SJRA Board members who are passionate advocates for Lake Houston. They are fighters and they never gave up.

And please, send your thanks to City of Houston Mayor Pro Tem Dave Martin and State Representative Dan Huberty. The dynamic duo did it again! How fortunate are we to have them representing and fighting for our area?

What is next?

- The Lake Houston Area Chamber will continue to work with the City of Houston and the San Jacinto River Authority on the approved recommendation. Both entities have participated in our monthly Long Term Recovery Task Force where updates and project statuses are presented. This is just one piece of our overall strategy and work to continue to help our area recover and become more resilient.

It's time for "Thank You" and Appreciation

- SJRA Board: Many have reached out requesting contact information to send their gratitude to the SJRA Board of Directors. There is an email form for the board of directors at <https://www.sjra.net/about/board/>. We encourage you to send a note of thanks. If you prefer to do this as a written letter, please send it to the Board's attention at SJRA's address: P. O. Box 329, Conroe, Texas 77305.
 - Mark Micheletti and Kaaren Cambio are two members of the SJRA Board who reside in Kingwood and have been fierce advocates on behalf of the lake lowering program. If you'd like to send an email of thanks to them, please send it to chamber@lakehouston.org and we will forward emails to them. Please use a subject line of "Thank You SJRA Board Members Mark Micheletti and Kaaren Cambio" so we can easily collect and distribute.
- City of Houston: Emails of thanks can be sent to Mayor Pro Tem Dave Martin at dave.martin@houstontx.gov and Mayor Turner at mayor@houstontx.gov.
- State Representative Dan Huberty: Emails of thanks can be sent to dan.huberty@house.state.tx.us.

Finally – thank you. This outcome from Thursday night would definitely not have been possible without your participation by sending emails, sharing news and info, and showing up at the meeting Thursday night.

Constituent Resources

Need Assistance?

Our office is always ready to assist you. Call or email us and we will do our best to help. Many State Agencies also have hotlines or citizen assistance offices to assist you. That contact information is available at this link, in alphabetical order:

<http://www.lrl.texas.gov/genInfo/stateAgencies.cfm>

Live Updates

All of the relevant information our office has gathered during the week will be posted to our Facebook page. By "liking" us, you will stay up-to-date about important matters across the state that affect you and your family. Click below to find our page.



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